



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Home Affairs

House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Violent Disorder

col 55 **The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Yvette Cooper):** ... Just before the parliamentary recess, I made a statement to this House on the horrendous attack that took place in Southport on 29 July. ...

That day in the House, all of us came together in sorrow and in solidarity with the families and the people of Southport, and I spoke of the bravery, compassion and distress of the police, the paramedics and the firefighters I had met that morning, who were first on the scene. It is truly appalling that within hours of that statement, the same Southport police were facing the most disgraceful violent attacks from criminals and thugs. Police officers were pelted with bricks and bottles. The local mosque—a place of worship—was subjected to violent attack. While millions of decent people across the country were praying for bereaved families, a criminal minority of thugs and extremists saw only an opportunity to hijack a town's grief. ...

col 56 In the days that followed, we saw further disgraceful violent disorder in a number of towns and cities. There were repeated attacks on the same police officers whose job it is to keep communities safe, and over 100 officers were injured. In Sunderland, a citizens advice branch was set alight. In Liverpool, a library and vital community hub was torched. In Hull, shops were looted and a mosque was targeted. In Rotherham, a hotel used as asylum accommodation was set alight when people were inside. In Bolton, clashes between rival groups involved fireworks and bottles being thrown. And we saw people targeted on the streets because of the colour of their skin. This disgraceful disorder and racist hatred, included that whipped up by a hateful minority online, was an insult to those grieving over Southport.

Let us be very clear: those violent and criminal attacks were not protests. They were not about grievance. They were thuggery, racism and crime. Plenty of people across the country have strong views about crime, policing, immigration, asylum, the NHS and more, but they do not pick up bricks and throw them at the police. They do not loot shops or attack places of worship, and they do not set buildings alight knowing that other human beings are inside. ...

The Prime Minister and I made it clear that criminals would pay the price for their violence, and we meant it. The Prime Minister announced a new national violent disorder programme to bring together the best policing capabilities and enhance intelligence sharing across forces, and Ministers worked daily with the police and criminal justice partners to ensure that there was a strong and determined response. The National Police Co-ordination Centre operated a national mobilisation plan to ensure that strategic reserves of public order officers were ready to be deployed in support of different police forces. More than 40,000 officer shifts were worked by public order officers over 10 days, with over 6,600 public order officers deployed on one day alone. Rest days were cancelled and additional hours were worked.

The Crown Prosecution Service deployed over 100 additional prosecutors, boosting its 24-hour charging service with additional advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions so that they could move swiftly to charge. The Ministry of Justice accelerated the work on new cells to bring 500 more prison places on stream earlier, and the Lord Chancellor made it clear that the courts stood ready to hear all the cases coming through. The Home Office established a new rapid procedure for security support for mosques to ensure that communities felt supported and safe. In total, around 1,280 people have been arrested, around 800 charges have been made and over 570 individuals had been brought before the courts for offences such as violent disorder, assaults on emergency workers, arson and encouraging violent attacks online. ...

I want now to update the House on some of the next steps we will take. ...

col 57 I am therefore ... His Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary and fire and rescue services to work quickly with the NPCC, the College of Policing and the national lead for public order, to review the lessons from this summer's events so that we can ensure that strong co-ordination and intelligence systems are in place and that there is sufficient public order policing for the future.

Secondly, as well as ensuring that there is proper punishment for those responsible for this disorder, we will be pressing forward at pace with this Government's mission to take back the safety of our streets and restore respect for the police and the rule of law. We will put thousands more neighbourhood police officers and police community support officers back on the streets, reversing the collapse in community policing and rebuilding the relationship between local communities and forces. ...

Thirdly, I have been concerned for a long time that not enough is being done to counter extremism—including both Islamist extremism and far right extremism—as there has been no proper strategy in place since 2015. I have ordered a rapid review of extremism to ensure that we have the strongest possible response to the poisonous ideologies that corrode community cohesion and fray the fabric of our democracy. ...

Fourthly, the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology will strengthen the requirements for social media companies to take responsibility for the poison being proliferated on their platforms with the roll-out of the measures in the Online Safety Act 2023, and we will continue to be clear that criminal content online results in criminal sanctions offline. Fifthly, we stand ready to support the police through the special grant for policing, and the Home Office will work with police and crime commissioners to ensure that the Riot Compensation Act 2016 works effectively in the areas that are affected. ...

col 58 **James Cleverly (Conservative):** ... There is not, and never can be, any excuse, justification or rationale for the violent disorder that we have seen. We cannot and will not let rioting thugs or extremists win. The Government must always back our police officers to do what is necessary to maintain law and order. Attacks on the police by any group must not be tolerated, and intimidation of the public or the media cannot be allowed.

Does the Home Secretary now see that the comments made by one of her Ministers at the time of the riots, seemingly making excuses for armed thugs who intimidated the media, undermines the Government's credibility, reinforces the accusations of bias, and puts people, including police officers, at increased risk?

Does the Home Secretary now also recognise that the Labour leadership kneeling in the immediate aftermath of the Black Lives Matter disorder, when violent protestors attacked police officers, makes it look like her party takes some forms of violence less seriously than others? Does she accept that any perception whatsoever of treating the same crime differently, based on the race, religion or community of the perpetrator, increases tension rather than reduces it? ...

Does the Home Secretary also recognise that the delay in holding a Cobra meeting until almost a week after these events started was a mistake, that it created a vacuum and that it delayed the actions that could have brought this disorder to an end more quickly? ...

col 59 Violence has absolutely no place on our streets. Anyone who engages in violent disorder or commits violent crime must face the full force of the law, no matter who they are. ...

Yvette Cooper: ... We set up the strategic reserve and it was in place for the second weekend; we had thousands of police officers who were ready. We did not use the old arrangements that we inherited from him, where mutual aid had to be on call and stood up in a rush when it was called for. ...

Secondly, the shadow Home Secretary referred to the issues around social media. Seriously—his party delayed the Online Safety Act 2023 for years. The Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology ... has already been working closely on putting more pressure on the social media companies, but the shadow Home Secretary's party did nothing for years. ...

col 60 Finally, I have to say that the shadow Home Secretary is playing games, undermining the credibility of the police. He is trying to blame the Prime Minister for something that happened four years ago—saying he is somehow responsible for the violent disorder on our streets this summer—and undermining the credibility of police officers. ...

Andy Slaughter (Labour): ... Was my right hon. Friend, like me, concerned about the number of very young people—pre-teen, in some cases—who took part? ...

Yvette Cooper: My hon. Friend makes an important point about the number of young people involved. Some of them had a string of convictions—they had history—but there were also young people who were drawn into violence and disorder, sometimes antisocial behaviour and the looting of shops, or sometimes into serious violence as well. ...

Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat): ... does she agree that this renders urgent the need to appoint an independent adviser on Islamophobia, a post that has been vacant for the past two years, and to have a formal definition of Islamophobia, in order to underpin and inform Government policy across the board and across all Departments?

col 61 **Yvette Cooper:** ... there were significant attacks on mosques, which is why we brought forward the work on mosque security. He is also right that we need to challenge Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate wherever it is found. ...

Patrick Hurley (Labour): ... It is no surprise to me that some of the targets of the violence were places of worship, a citizens advice bureau and a library. These are the places where communities go to heal, and when they are driven to improve each other and themselves. The thugs who attacked those targets set their faces against community self-improvement, so it is no surprise that those were the targets they attacked.

For those who continue to propagate the lie that the thuggery we saw came from justifiable concerns or that the actions of the mob are somehow justified, will the Home Secretary reiterate that what happened in Southport provides no justification at all for anyone throwing bricks at the police, attacking people in their own cars or burning down buildings with people inside them? ...

Yvette Cooper: ... He is absolutely right that no one should ever use the terrible attack on three little girls as an excuse for the kinds of violent disorder we have seen. ...

Julian Lewis (Conservative): Does the Home Secretary agree that one reason why what might be called her shock and awe policy successfully shut down the violence so quickly was the speed with which the offenders were brought before the courts and sentenced? ...

col 62 **Yvette Cooper:** ... There is no doubt that the swift response from the police, the prosecution and the criminal justice system had a strong impact and was clearly a deterrent and an overwhelming signal to people that if they get involved in disorder they will pay the price. ...

Dawn Butler (Labour): ... There is no excuse for being racist or for using the innocent lives of Elsie, Alice and Bebe. ... It is important that we are all mindful about how we use language in this House, especially when we are referring to immigration and migration. It is also important that we talk not only about thuggery and racism, but about Islamophobia. The rise in racism is frightening ...

Yvette Cooper: ... One of the most troubling things that we saw during those days of violent disorder was people feeling fearful to be out on the streets because of the colour of their skin. That should never happen in our country, which is why we do have to challenge racism and extremism wherever they are found. ...

Gavin Robinson (DUP): ... I agree with the Home Secretary's condemnation of violence. Indeed, I suspect her unwillingness to open up this statement is because she wants the voice of this House to be one of condemnation of violence. She is right about that ...

col 63 **Yvette Cooper:** ... An important debate needs to take place around border security, the asylum system, the way immigration rules operate and so on. Those are all reforms that this Government want to bring forward, but, quite simply, it is important that no one should excuse the violent disorder that we saw as somehow being related to issues about policy. Lots of people have really strong views about immigration policy, but they do not pick up bricks and throw them at the police.

Jonathan Brash (Labour): ... It is undoubtedly the case that the violence was fuelled by the lies and misinformation that are largely, although not exclusively, perpetrated online. What can the Home Secretary do to challenge and prevent the spread of that misinformation ...

Yvette Cooper: My hon. Friend is right that there has been continual misinformation about this—often deliberate misinformation. Those who made the decision to get involved in violent disorder—attacks on the police, attacks on shops, the looting and the disgraceful behaviour—have to take responsibility for their own actions. They cannot blame things that they saw online for that.

Equally, we have also made it clear that what is criminal offline is also criminal online. There is an important responsibility on those posting online and also on the social media companies to make sure that criminal content is taken down. ...

col 64 **Pete Wishart (SNP):** We in Scotland are grateful that we were spared any of the violence that we saw throughout the rest of the United Kingdom. The Home Secretary says that she wants a debate. Does she accept that the way that immigrants and asylum seekers have been portrayed by a host of political voices has helped to foster, foment and even encourage some of the scenes that we witnessed? ...

Yvette Cooper: ... Some of what we saw was extremism, as well as local criminals and thugs. Some people who had a violent history of crime in the local area also got involved. To deal with the disorder, we have to deal with all the different aspects and origins of it.

col 65 **Stella Creasy (Labour Co-op):** ... these events did not happen in a vacuum. That is why, after three days of distress and panic in Walthamstow because somebody published a list suggesting that thugs were going to come to our community, thousands of people took to our streets. They stood with members of our local mosques and churches, holding hands with them to keep them safe. They helped businesses to board up their properties. We even had knitters against Nazis.

As much as we are grateful for that solidarity, we ... know that the fear endures even after

the immediate threat has gone. That is the challenge that we have to deal with in this place: those people who promote anger rather than answers to the challenges that we face in our society. ...

Yvette Cooper: Nobody in Britain should ever feel afraid because of the colour of their skin. That is the really troubling thing that we found people saying and feeling as a result of the violent disorder earlier in the summer. I have set up a review around countering extremism. I have had concerns for a long time that not enough is being done to counter extremism in this country. That means far-right extremism, Islamist extremism, and some of the other forms of changing extremism that do not fit necessarily into the clear, more historical, categories.

There has been a definition that the Home Office has used for a long time around “extreme right-wing” extremism, and some of the issues online, but we also know that there are changing patterns, particularly with online radicalisation. ... We need to tackle all forms of extremism and violent hatred. It is so important to our wellbeing as a democracy and who we are as a country. We have always stood against that kind of extremism, and we must continue to do so.

col 66 Nadia Whittome (Labour): The appalling racist riots may be over for now, but the ideology behind them is a growing threat, both here and internationally. In Germany, for example, the far right has just won a state election for the first time since the second world war. Does the Home Secretary agree that to prevent more people being won over by the far right, our Government must deliver proper improvements in living standards in order to combat disillusionment, and refuse to march to the beat of the far right’s drum on immigration and Islamophobia?

Yvette Cooper: Clearly, we want to see increasing living standards right across the board. ... We also need a serious and sensible debate on a range of policies, including on crime, immigration and other issues ... We have to take much stronger action to counter the kinds of online radicalisation ... that we have seen, whether we are talking about far-right extremism or Islamist extremism. ...

Siân Berry (Green): The ugly, racist mob violence in our towns and cities this summer was incited and organised by far-right groups, often using electronic platforms including Telegram and X. For example, on Telegram, groups have distributed instructions for making petrol bombs. Locations of hotels housing migrants and offices of immigration lawyers were also shared. Elon Musk, the proprietor of X, has greatly amplified some accounts that promote racist violence in our cities, while failing to take action to remove others. In the Home Secretary’s response, will she look at options for prosecuting those who own platforms that may have enabled or committed crimes under section 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006?

Yvette Cooper: ... full implementation of the Online Safety Act 2023 has been long delayed and is still needed. One of the provisions of the Act is a requirement on social media companies to remove illegal content. Many of the examples that she raises are of illegal content that is still available online, which is shocking and irresponsible. ... Social media companies should also take much broader responsibility for ignoring their own terms and conditions, their responsibility towards communities and public safety. ...

col 67 Apsana Begum (Independent): For too long, Muslims have been scapegoated for the failings of the political and economic system by the same type of politics that led to the hostile environment for migrants. Can the Home Secretary outline the steps that she will take to ensure that any measures that arise from the rapid review of extremism do not perpetuate or extend harm to the very communities—Muslims and migrants—who have been the primary target of the far right’s violence?

col 68 Yvette Cooper: ... The whole purpose of the review on countering extremism is to make sure that we tackle the kinds of extremism that we have seen grow in this country in recent years. That includes far-right extremism, Islamist extremism,

the violent Islamophobia and attacks that we have seen, and concerns around antisemitic attacks. We have to make sure that we do so, and it is immensely important that we work with the communities who are often the most affected by extremism and the damage that it can do. ...

Andrew Pakes (Labour): ... Can the Home Secretary give confidence and comfort to communities like mine that, in the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to tackle extremism, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred? ...

Yvette Cooper: ... That is why the Deputy Prime Minister is taking forward work around community cohesion. We should also recognise that, right across the country, the overwhelming majority of people were truly appalled by what we saw from a small minority of people. The action that we took was important, because it meant that the small minority involved in disorder faced consequences, but they do not speak for Britain...

col 69 **Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... With regard to community tensions, it is essential that everyday people who have legitimate concerns about illegal immigration are not drawn into situations that become less about the right to display disapproval and protest, and more about violence. How will the Government seek to ensure that those with legitimate concerns are heard, and that those whose intent is simply to disrupt and destroy are dealt with appropriately?

Yvette Cooper: ... He is right that most people in the country want a serious debate about the importance of net migration coming down. ... We also need to recognise that most people across the country want stronger border controls, and for the UK to continue to do its bit to help those who have fled persecution and conflict, but they want the rules to be properly respected and enforced, and those who do not have a right to be in the UK properly returned. ...

Most people want to be part of that debate; the overwhelming majority do not want to go anywhere near this kind of violence and thuggery, because that is not the kind of country we are. Those are not the values that most people in this country have. ...

Kim Johnson (Labour): ... the diverse communities of my Liverpool Riverside constituency, particularly those who are visibly black and Muslim, are still very anxious about going out, due to the rise in racism and Islamophobia. My right hon. Friend mentioned the Deputy Prime Minister's work on community cohesion. I would be grateful if she confirmed whether local authorities like mine will receive additional funding to undertake that work.

Yvette Cooper: The Deputy Prime Minister will be working with local councils across the country on what we need to do to improve cohesion. ... we cannot have a situation where people feel afraid or at risk on the streets of this country because of the colour of their skin or their religion. That is why it is so important that the two programmes on cohesion and extremism work in parallel.

col 70 **Connor Naismith (Labour):** Does the Home Secretary agree that those who suggest that this country has some form of two-tier policing serve only to undermine our brave frontline police officers ...

Yvette Cooper: ... Police officers in this country take an oath when they become officers to operate without fear or favour. ... Those claims have been used by those who want somehow to legitimise attacks on the police, who work so hard to keep us safe. It is wrong to make those claims. ...

col 71 **Afzal Khan (Labour):** ... the Home Secretary ... announced rapid access to the protective security scheme for mosques, which was welcomed by mosques across the UK, to help them provide additional security when needed. Can she confirm how many mosques have accessed that funding, and what proactive engagement the Home Office has had with mosques and Muslim organisations to support them in their funding applications?

Yvette Cooper: ... everybody has the right to feel safe at their place of worship,

without fear of attack. I will send him further details on the precise numbers, but dozens of mosques came forward and were provided with swift support to ensure that they had security in place under the accelerated procedure. It is important that Muslim communities feel safe.

col 72 Andy McDonald (Labour): ... the Home Secretary ... will be aware that the riots, which sought to exploit the Southport killings for a racist and Islamophobic agenda, included one in Middlesbrough that saw homes, businesses and vehicles damaged in a predominantly Asian and Muslim area, where thugs created roadblocks that allowed only white British drivers to pass. That racist violence caused real fear, resulting in the postponement of the Middlesbrough Mela, the premier celebration of multiculturalism in the north-east. The community, which so magnificently cleaned up the mess, refuses to be cowed, so the mela will go ahead this coming weekend. ...

Yvette Cooper: I am glad to hear my hon. Friend's description of the way in which communities come together to celebrate. It is distressing to hear about the fear that was created and the community events that were delayed because of it. ...

Joani Reid (Labour): There has been much discussion of the role that social media played in fuelling the violent disorder that we have seen on our streets. Many of the extremists were swiftly arrested and charged; does my right hon. Friend agree that those who spread pernicious and poisonous online lies should also share responsibility for the disorder that we have seen, and that online thugs who deliberately stir up hatred and division should have been similarly punished? If not, what does she think can be done about this increasingly wicked online behaviour?

Yvette Cooper: My hon. Friend is right: we have seen deliberate attempts to radicalise people or promote extremism online, including on social media platforms, and we have seen illegal content not taken down. Obviously, incitement and encouragement of serious violence and racial hatred offline has been a criminal offence in this country for many years, but what is criminal offline is also criminal online. ...

Andrew Lewin (Labour): Last month, Elon Musk fanned the flames of violent disorder. He personally amplified extremist accounts and, shamefully, even said that he believed our country was heading for "civil war". Some 10 months previously, the leader of the Conservative party invited Elon Musk to Downing Street, and in a stunt, they even superimposed his new logo on to the front of Downing Street. Does my right hon. Friend agree that that was a major error of judgment ...

col 73 Yvette Cooper: There is an important point here, which is that the social media companies and their owners need to take some responsibility for the criminal content that appears on their platforms, but also for the way that they operate—for the way that their algorithms operate, and how they can be used and manipulated by extremists. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/BCE59770-06E2-4D12-908D-4CDAD8046C58/ViolentDisorder>

House of Commons Oral Answers

Islamophobia

Afzal Khan (Labour) [900272] What steps [the Minister] is taking to help tackle Islamophobia.

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Angela Rayner): Islamophobia is a scourge on our society that must be rooted out, and I thank my hon. Friend for his work on this issue. Much of last month's violent disorder was Islamophobic, and the targeting of Muslims shows that

we need to go further and faster in tackling this vile hatred, which was fuelled by fake news. We have now provided greater security and rapid support for Muslim communities, and our Faith Minister in the other place, Lord Khan, is actively considering further steps to crack down on anti-Muslim hatred, monitor Islamophobia and engage the community effectively.

Afzal Khan: My right hon. Friend will know the fear and distress that the civil disorder this summer caused to many of my constituents and to Muslim communities across the country who were targeted by violent extremists. I am sure that she will join me in making it clear that the vast majority of people in our country—of all faiths and backgrounds—wish only to live together peacefully and utterly reject those who stir up division. What engagement have Ministers undertaken with Muslim communities since those events, and what are they doing to give reassurance for the future?

Angela Rayner: My hon. Friend is absolutely right to underline that the vast majority of people in this country—of all faiths and backgrounds—want only to live together peacefully, and my Department is at the heart of the Government's work to restore order and unity in all our communities following the appalling disturbances. While we continue to make sure that criminals are brought to swift justice, the vital work to strengthen the bond between the Government and communities, including our Muslim communities and those of many other faiths and backgrounds, is central to this Government's mission to bring the whole country together.

Lee Anderson (Reform): Could the Secretary of State please explain to me and the House what the Government's definition of Islamophobia actually is?

Angela Rayner: I say to the hon. Member that a new definition must be given careful consideration so that it comprehensively reflects multiple perspectives and considers the potential implications for different communities. We are actively considering our approach to Islamophobia, including definitions, and we will provide further updates in due course.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/22A1825D-B496-4540-8FA0-DCD9BC70A133/Islamophobia>

Community Cohesion

Alex Baker (Labour) [900273] What steps [the Minister's] Department is taking to help promote community cohesion.

Noah Law (Labour) [900276] What steps [the Minister's] Department is taking to help promote community cohesion.

Jacob Collier (Labour) [900280] What steps [the Minister's] Department is taking to help promote community cohesion.

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Angela Rayner): Last month's appalling violence exposed deep-rooted weaknesses in our society. Division and decline, combined with rising Islamophobia and racism, contributed to the vile scenes of hatred. I am determined that we should now support the recovery of towns and cities affected, and investment in community cohesion. That has started with a comprehensive support offer for Southport, and I can confirm that I will now lead cross-Government efforts on this issue. I will update the House on our plans in due course.

Alex Baker: Whatever our beliefs, faith leaders and faith groups can play an important role in bringing us all together. Will the Deputy Prime Minister join me in commending the many faith leaders I have met across Aldershot and Farnborough who are working to promote tolerance and understanding across our community? Can she outline what her Department is doing to encourage those community leaders, whose work reminds us that we are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us?

Angela Rayner: ... I was proud to serve alongside my good friend Jo Cox in this House, and her words about our common humanity and what unites us ring as true

as ever. I have met many local communities, businesses and other groups affected by the acts of deplorable violence that we have seen across the country in recent weeks, including in places such as Stoke-on-Trent and Rotherham. I heard powerful stories from those who experienced appalling violence, but I also heard about how those communities came together to defend their streets and were united against hatred and thuggery. I know that my hon. Friend has been a leader in her own community, and we Ministers will support her and her constituents in the spirit that she has set out.

Noah Law: Our community cohesion in Cornwall is being undermined by the housing crisis, with many locals priced out or even facing homelessness. This matter requires urgent attention, and I am therefore pleased that this Government have placed building new homes at the top of our legislative agenda. Can the Deputy Prime Minister ensure that we are building the right kinds of homes in Cornwall—namely, social homes?

Angela Rayner: Absolutely, and my hon. Friend is right. We are strengthening housing targets and acting to ensure that local plans are ambitious enough to support this Government's commitment to 1.5 million homes in this Parliament, including social homes. Under our new proposals, assessed housing need across Cornwall would increase by around 65%, demonstrating our commitment to approving the supply of new homes that his constituents desperately need.

Jacob Collier: Following the horrific Islamophobic attacks experienced by Muslim communities around the country, the Princess Street mosque in Burton-upon-Trent opened its doors to the wider community so that everyone could learn more about Islam and see their place of worship. This was a way to challenge misinformation and promote mutual understanding. Does the Deputy Prime Minister welcome this as an example of how communities can help bring people together?

Angela Rayner: I absolutely welcome it, and I commend the actions such as those taken by the Burton-upon-Trent mosque. I agree with my hon. Friend that building understanding among those from different backgrounds is vital to fostering strong communities. This Government are committed to working with communities around the UK to build a culture of cohesion, trust and mutual respect and we will outline further actions in due course. ...

Jim Shannon (DUP): ... Sometimes it is easy to dwell upon the negativity, but there are positives as well. There were positives in my constituency when two people decided to burn down the mosque, because they were caught by the police and they will hopefully be imprisoned, and because the community came together, which is the issue I want to put over. Across this great United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, there are many people who want to live together. All the people in the Baptist church that I go to in Newtownards were praying for those people in that church, and that is the Ards and the Strangford that I know. Sometimes we need to put over the good things as well.

Angela Rayner: ...he is absolutely right. When I was visiting those communities, I saw them coming together. I saw the way in which they worked well and the way in which everybody looked out for each other. It reminded me of why I am in this place and why I do what I do for the great British people and what they do.

Tim Farron (Liberal Democrat): In Westmorland, we have a story that has underpinned cohesion for decades. That is the true story of the Windermere children. In August 1945, almost half the children who survived the Nazi death camps were rehabilitated on the banks of Windermere at Troutbeck Bridge. I wonder if the Deputy Prime Minister would agree to meet me, because a group of us, including members of the '45 Aid Society and the local school, the Lakes school, want to build a lasting memorial at Troutbeck Bridge, on the site where the children were housed, while rebuilding the school that was built on that site. Will she carry on the cross-party work that we had before the election, and meet me and others from that community to help make that a reality?

Angela Rayner: I congratulate the hon. Member on his work in this area. Either

myself or one of my Ministers will be happy to meet him. ...

Kemi Badenoch (Conservative): Can the right hon. Lady give me her assessment of the Khan review into social cohesion?

Angela Rayner: The Khan review into social cohesion is one element of what we need to do to get back to addressing the issues of community cohesion, as opposed to the divisiveness of the way in which the previous Government looked at community cohesion. What I would like to see, instead of the language and tone we have seen from Members on the right hon. Member's Benches, is the tone that the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) took around how we can bring communities together and work together to ensure that people can respect people's differences and celebrate what makes us British, and that is that we all have different places.

Kemi Badenoch: The right hon. Lady has not read the Khan review, as she would not have given that answer if she had.

The review talks about the 2021 incident at Batley grammar school, where a teacher was failed by local police and the local council and had to go into hiding. Given the fears about the rise in Islamist sectarianism in communities such as West Yorkshire, what are the right hon. Lady's plans, especially as she has not read the review, to ensure that such incidents do not happen again?

Angela Rayner: I have read the review. Maybe the right hon. Lady was busy launching her leadership campaign earlier today.

The point I am making is that under the previous Administration there was not an element of community cohesion but constant division and stoking of division. I tried to bring our education system together when I was shadow Education Secretary. Across education, across my Department and across our Government I would like to see how we can celebrate our differences and bring communities together. If the right hon. Lady is successful in her bid to become Leader of the Opposition, I hope she will work with us on that endeavour.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/0D204C51-88E8-4A4B-BAFC-DCFD4925918F/CommunityCohesion>

The Khan Review, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65fdbfd265ca2ffef17da79c/The_Khan_review.pdf

Scottish Government FoI Release

Pro-Palestine marches in Scotland correspondence

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202400419294/>

and

<https://tinyurl.com/5h58w8ab>

Welsh Government

Anti-Racist Wales Culture, Heritage and Sport Fund 2024 to 2025

Closing date for applications: 30 September 2024

... The Welsh Government's Programme for Government emphasises the importance of representing and reflecting the history and culture of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to ensure that their contribution to Wales is recognised while enabling equal access and participation. This will deliver improved outcomes for all, and will better reflect and promote a multi-cultural, vibrant and diverse Wales, which is fundamental to delivering our vision of a truly anti-racist Wales. ...

The Anti-racist Wales Culture, Heritage and Sport Fund will provide capital grant funding to support organisations to deliver the Culture Heritage and Sport goals and actions in the ARWAP and our Programme for Government commitments. ...

For full information, including an application form, see

<https://www.gov.wales/anti-racist-wales-culture-heritage-and-sport-fund-2024-2025-guidance-and-application-form>

TOP

Holocaust

See Tim Farron's oral question and Angela Raynor's answer that are included under "Community Cohesion" in the Home Affairs section above.

TOP

Israel

See also the Scottish Government FoI Release "Pro-Palestine marches in Scotland correspondence" that is included in the Home Affairs section above.

House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Middle East Update

col 37 The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (David Lammy): ... On taking office in July, I told the House that this Government's priority in the region will be to advance the cause of peace. That continues to be our mission on every front: in Israel, in the west bank, in Lebanon, in the Red sea and, of course, in Gaza, where we need an immediate ceasefire, the protection of civilians, the immediate release of all hostages and more aid getting into Gaza.

Over the summer, we faced the prospect of full-scale war breaking out between Lebanese Hezbollah and Israel. On each of my three visits to the region, including alongside my right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary and, most recently, my joint visit with French Foreign Minister Séjourné, I have urged Lebanese Hezbollah, the Lebanese Government and Israel to engage with the US-led discussions to resolve their disagreements diplomatically and to reach a peaceful resolution through the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1701. ...

Our common goal of peace in the middle east will never be lasting until there is safety, security and sovereignty for both Israel and a Palestinian state. We must all keep at the forefront of our mind the pain, the anguish and the horror this conflict has caused for so many ordinary civilians. The victims of the 7 October atrocity. The hostages and all those still enduring unimaginable suffering, whether they are hoping to see their loved ones again or are mourning their loss, as the tragic events of this weekend illustrate with the recovery of the bodies of six murdered hostages. The Israeli people still living under rocket fire, not only from Hamas but from other hostile actors explicitly dedicated to Israel's annihilation, and fighting an enemy in Hamas whose appalling tactics endanger countless civilian lives. And the innocent Palestinians, with tens of thousands killed in the fighting, their numbers growing by the day, including distressing numbers of women and children. Many mothers are so malnourished that they cannot produce milk for their babies, and families are struggling to keep their children alive—disease and famine loom ever larger.

Heroic humanitarians are putting their lives on the line to help others, including the brave

aid workers I met from the United Nations agencies and at the Palestine Red Crescent Society warehouse I visited alongside France's Foreign Minister last month. ...

The escalation we are now seeing in the west bank, as well as in Gaza, is deeply worrying, with many communities facing settler violence amid an ongoing occupation, and so many on either side of this terrible conflict convinced that the world does not grasp the reality of Israel's predicament, or the depth of Palestinian suffering.

col 38 Throughout my life, I have been a friend of Israel: a liberal, progressive Zionist who believes in Israel as a democratic state and a homeland for the Jewish people, which has the right both to exist and to defend itself. But I believe also that Israel will only exist in safety and security if there is a two-state solution that guarantees the rights of all Israeli citizens and their Palestinian neighbours, who have their own inalienable right to self-determination and security.

As concern at the horrifying scenes in Gaza has risen, many in this House, as well as esteemed lawyers and international organisations, have raised British arms export licensing to Israel. After raising my own concerns from Opposition, on taking office, I immediately sought to update the review. ...

We have rigorously followed every stage of the process established by the previous Conservative Government. Let me first be clear on the review's scope. This Government are not an international court. We have not, and could not, arbitrate on whether or not Israel has breached international humanitarian law. This is a forward-looking evaluation, not a determination of innocence or guilt, and it does not prejudge any future determinations by the competent courts.

However, facing a conflict such as this, it is this Government's legal duty to review export licences. Criterion 2C of the strategic export licensing criteria states that the Government will "not issue export licences if there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law".

It is with regret that I inform the House today that the assessment I have received leaves me unable to conclude anything other than that, for certain UK arms exports to Israel, there exists a clear risk that they might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

I have informed my right hon. Friend the Business and Trade Secretary. Therefore, he is today announcing the suspension of around 30 licences, from a total of approximately 350, to Israel, as required under the Export Control Act 2002. These include licences for equipment that we assess is for use in the current conflict in Gaza, such as important components that go into military aircraft, including fighter aircraft, helicopters and drones, as well as items that facilitate ground targeting. For transparency, the Government are publishing a summary of our assessment.

Today, I want to underline four points about these decisions. First, Israel's actions in Gaza continue to lead to immense loss of civilian life, widespread destruction to civilian infrastructure and immense suffering. In many cases, it has not been possible to reach a determinative conclusion on allegations regarding Israel's conduct of hostilities, in part because there is insufficient information either from Israel or other reliable sources to verify such claims. Nevertheless, it is the assessment of His Majesty's Government that Israel could reasonably do more to ensure that lifesaving food and medical supplies reach civilians in Gaza, in the light of the appalling humanitarian situation.

col 39 This Government are also deeply concerned by credible claims of mistreatment of detainees, which the International Committee of the Red Cross cannot investigate after being denied access to places of detention. ...

Secondly, there can be no doubt that Hamas pay not the slightest heed to international humanitarian law and endanger civilians by embedding themselves in the tightly concentrated civilian population and in civilian infrastructure. There is no equivalence between Hamas terrorists—or indeed Iran and its partners and proxies—and Israel's democratic Government, but to license arms exports to Israel we must assess its

compliance with international humanitarian law, notwithstanding the abhorrence of its opponents' tactics and ideology.

Thirdly, this is not a blanket ban or an arms embargo. The suspension targets around 30 of approximately 350 licences to Israel in total, for items that could be used in the current conflict in Gaza. The rest will continue. The action we are taking will not have a material impact on Israel's security. This suspension covers only items that might be used in the current conflict. ...

Fourthly, the Government will keep our position under review. Commitment to comply with international humanitarian law is not the only criterion in making export-licensing decisions. We will continue to work with our allies to improve the situation. ...

Mr Speaker, we do not take this decision lightly, but we note that, on previous occasions, Ministers from all parts of the House—Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat—chose not to license exports to Israel. In 1982, Margaret Thatcher imposed a full arms embargo and an oil embargo on Israel as it fought in Lebanon. Conflicts in Gaza prompted Gordon Brown to suspend five licences in 2009, and Vince Cable chose not to issue new licences while conducting a review in 2014. Like them, this Government take seriously their role in applying export licensing law, reflecting the published criteria and the specific circumstances. But let me leave this House in no doubt: the UK continues to support Israel's right to self-defence in accordance with international law.

col 40 In April, British fighter jets intercepted Iranian missiles aimed at Israel, preventing significant loss of civilian life. We supported robust action against the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen, who have attacked Israel directly as well as Israeli-linked shipping. Iran should be in no doubt of our commitment to challenge its reckless and destabilising activity in the region and across the world. ... we continue to hold Iran to account, including through extensive sanctions.

Today, we are doing so again. We are announcing new sanctions on four Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps force targets, which have a role in supporting Iranian proxy actions in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Through the UK's dedicated Iran sanctions regime we have sanctioned more than 400 Iranian individuals and entities. And through our work with partners, we are exposing and containing Iran's destabilising weapons development, where soon we will be introducing further regulations to bolster existing bans on the export of goods and technology significant to Iran's production of drones and missiles.

Let me be clear: we will continue to work with Israel and our partners to tackle the threat from Iran across the region. This Government will continue to stand for Israel's security, and we will always do so in a manner consistent with our obligations to domestic and international law. ...

Andrew Mitchell (Conservative): ... Over the weekend, we were once again reminded of the tragic human toll of this conflict, with Israel recovering the bodies of six more innocent hostages murdered by Hamas. The only way this conflict will be brought to an end, and for the suffering to end, is through the release of those hostages. This cruel captivity has lasted almost a year. Their suffering and jeopardy is intolerable for Israel, and it should be intolerable for anyone who cares about human rights and human dignity. Many of us in this House have met with the families of the hostages. Even in the midst of unimaginable pain and anxiety, they keep the torch burning for their loved ones, publicly highlighting their plight and tremendous bravery.

Let us be clear that the onus is on Hamas. They are using the Palestinian people as human shields. Hamas have no humanity and no shame. As Hamas inflict terrible suffering on both the Israeli and the Palestinian people, it should not be forgotten that another Iranian-backed proxy—Hezbollah—is engaged in continuous attacks on Israel's northern border, with the risk of further and yet more dangerous escalation across the blue line. Our support for Israel's security is rock solid in the face of threats from those who wish it serious harm, as we showed in April this year when British personnel and weaponry were used to counter Iran's massive missile attack. We will look carefully at the limited arms embargo

memorandum that the Foreign Secretary has promised the House. ...He will, I know, and as he said, be careful not to indicate, in any way at all, any moral equivalence between Hamas and the democratically elected Government of Israel.

col 41 In Government, we introduced sanctions to undermine Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. We also sanctioned extremist Israeli settlers who committed human rights abuses against Palestinian communities in the west bank, and we welcome the new sanctions that the Foreign Secretary has announced on four IRGC-Quds Force targets. ... While Israel must protect its vital security interests, we urge the Netanyahu Government to do so in such a way that minimises the risk of yet further instability and escalation.

Turning finally to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, we convey our thanks to the World Health Organisation and UNICEF staff who have been racing to get polio vaccinations administered across Gaza. They are doing vital work during this agreed pause. Pauses offer not only the potential to get much-needed humanitarian aid in but a window to get the hostages out, and pauses can help to create the conditions necessary to bring about a sustainable peace. On the distribution of aid, we strongly support calls for watertight deconfliction processes and the utmost protection of aid workers. Humanitarian aid can make a difference only if it is properly and safely distributed. Guaranteed deconfliction for aid convoys and other humanitarian work is absolutely essential. ...

We all want the terrible suffering of both the Israeli and Palestinian people to end. It feels as if we are at a point where this conflict could go in two radically different directions. Although the region faces a potential conflagration, it is also possible that cooler heads on all sides might prevail. ...

David Lammy: ... I recall that Lord Cameron said that he was concerned that Israel had violated international humanitarian law. The shadow Foreign Secretary himself has repeatedly called on Israel to abide by international humanitarian law and said that in certain actions it may not have complied with international humanitarian law. In April, the shadow Minister—the hon. Member for Rutland and Stamford (Alicia Kearns), who was in her seat slightly earlier—said that the UK had no choice but to suspend arms, so the shadow Foreign Secretary can recognise that this is not a partisan issue. ...

col 42 The shadow Foreign Secretary is right, like me, to underline that there is no moral equivalence between Hamas, who began this atrocity on 7 October, and Israel's prosecution of getting the hostages out and defending itself, even though I have said that there is a clear risk in relation to our export licensing regime. ...

In the west bank, of course we recognise the important security concerns of Israel, but we are deeply concerned with the way that we have seen these actions being prosecuted over the last few days, and we call for de-escalation. On the situation in Gaza, successive Foreign Secretaries have now raised with the Israelis—I raised it directly with Prime Minister Netanyahu—that not enough trucks are getting in. It is still the case today, after 11 months of conflict, that not enough trucks are getting in. The Minister for Development was assessing the situation from Jordan, as I was, just before that, with the Red Crescent.

It has been important for us to demonstrate leadership in the UN and to press for pauses so that the children of Gaza can be vaccinated against polio. We have that pause in place, I think between 8 am and 2 pm, so that those children can get the vaccinations they need so that they do not suffer.

Dawn Butler (Labour): ... I agree with the shadow Secretary of State that it is clear that Hamas have no humanity and no shame. Some have said that there is only a pause to vaccinate children because polio may spread beyond Gaza. With so many children killed in this war, I understand why some may say that. The World Health Organisation says that at least 90% of children under 10 must be immunised in a very short period of time. With that in mind, can the Secretary of State please tell the House what measures the Government are taking to ensure further agreements are made to have a pause for as

long as possible and that both sides can adhere to?

David Lammy: I was very pleased to meet ... Dr Tedros, who leads the World Health Organisation, to discuss those issues and his particular concerns about disease and polio in the area. We continue to press for a ceasefire and are working with all colleagues to get it. ...

col 43 **Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat):** This week, we received the terrible news of the deaths of six Israeli hostages. Among them was Hersh Goldberg-Polin, whose mother Rachel I met when I was last in Jerusalem. I cannot imagine her pain. That pain is not diluted by the pain of so many others, including, yes, the families of other Israeli hostages, but also thousands of families in Gaza, for the dead there. ...

We have seen horrific violence in the west bank. Israeli forces launched an operation inside refugee camps, terrifying children in their beds, and have been accused of breaking their own codes of conduct. The situation seems to go only from bad to worse, so I welcome the Foreign Secretary's remarks about the suspension of some licences for arms export to the Israel Defence Forces, but given the seriousness of the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice cases, questions remain about the many hundreds of other such licences ... I urge the Government to go further. Will they ban goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements? If the settlements are illegal, why are we allowing trade with them? Will the Government sanction Ben Gvir and Smotrich, as the European Union's Josep Borrell is considering? ...

David Lammy: I am grateful to the hon. Lady. I have now personally spoken to or met all the families of British and UK-linked hostages and have heard for myself the suffering that they have endured since their loved ones were taken on 7 October. There needs to be an end to this nightmare. ...

The hon. Lady is right to raise the issues on the west bank. We are deeply concerned about the ongoing IDF military operation in the occupied west bank and the attacks from Palestinian militants. We recognise, of course, Israel's need to defend itself against security threats, but we are deeply worried about the methods that Israel has employed and by reports of civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure in particular. ... We condemn the settler expansion—particularly the record levels this year—and the increase in settler violence. I condemn the language that has been used by Ministers in the Israeli Government—Smotrich and Ben Gvir—in relation to that in particular. It is entirely unacceptable language, and should be condemned by the Israeli Government as a whole. ...

col 44 **Kim Johnson (Labour):** The escalation of military violence in the west bank has led to the reported deaths of Palestinians and increased settler violence, resulting in illegal occupation and violent land theft. Amid this escalation, the US has imposed sanctions on Israeli groups. Medical Aid for Palestinians has claimed that the UK Government have not acted with due urgency, so can the Foreign Secretary clarify the Government's position on this issue and what immediate actions they will be taking, other than condemnation of this action?

David Lammy: ... We are in dialogue with our closest allies on this issue, and we will not flinch from dealing with the issues at hand if we need to.

Julian Lewis (Conservative): Can the Foreign Secretary assure the House that what appears to be a carefully calibrated response to a dreadful situation will not in any way impair the valuable co-operation between Israel and the United Kingdom where the sharing of intelligence about international terrorist activity is concerned?

David Lammy: The right hon. Gentleman is among the very few in this House who understand the breadth, depth, and importance for our own national security of that relationship. We have a very important people-to-people relationship with Israel—250,000 Jewish people in this country—and a very important trading relationship with Israel, but our intelligence, military and security co-operation is essential, not just to our national interest but to the security of much of the world.

As such, I have made this decision with regret. It is in sorrow, not in anger, and the right hon. Gentleman will know that other Governments—Conservative Governments—have gone for a full arms embargo. We have not done that today, because we recognise that with Hezbollah, the Houthis and Hamas, it is right that Israel has the means to defend itself.

Emily Thornberry (Labour): Could my right hon. Friend reiterate the very important point that this is not an arms embargo on Israel? ...

David Lammy: ... this very sober assessment is based on a clear risk. On the basis of that clear risk, we have sought to suspend export licences for arms and weaponry that may be used in Gaza ...

col 45 Kit Malthouse (Conservative): ... The Secretary of State will know that I have long been concerned about the situation in the west bank. I understand that the measures that he has taken today, and indeed sanctions generally, are not purely performative—he wants them to have some bite—so I wanted to ask about the case of the Hilltop Youth. That violent settler organisation was sanctioned by the previous Government earlier this year and was recently described as a bunch of terrorists by the head of the internal security service in Israel, yet our sanctions have seemingly had no impact on its behaviour and conduct or on the violent persecution that it is visiting upon innocent Palestinians in the west bank.

Will the Secretary of State consider extending our sanctions to those who support and sustain that organisation and others, both within Israel and externally? ...

David Lammy: The right hon. Gentleman ... is absolutely right to draw our focus to what is happening on the west bank. Not because of the immediate violence that we have seen in the last two days, but because the level of violence—the expansion and the sense of impunity that one sees when one is in the west bank—is of huge concern. ...

Andy McDonald (Labour): ... What assessment has the Foreign Secretary made of the impact of his suspension of 30 licences? Israel has shown little sign of responding to pressure from the outside world, so ... I ask what further steps he is prepared to take. ...

David Lammy: ... Let me make it clear that the announcement that I have made today follows a process, which was set up by the last Government in 2021. We have followed that process to the letter ... The point of the process is in no way to punish Israel, but to make sure that our export licensing regime remains among the most robust in the world. ...

col 46 Brendan O'Hara (SNP): ... I will press the Foreign Secretary on the issue of the UK recognising that the Netanyahu Government's use of UK weapons poses a "clear risk" of the violation of international humanitarian law. He will be aware that there is no legal definition of what is an offensive weapon and what is a defensive weapon, so why and on what basis, if there is a "clear risk"—in his words—of the violation of international humanitarian law, has he not imposed a blanket ban on Israel until that risk has gone away completely?

David Lammy: We have one of the most robust export licensing regimes in the world. The process requires us to make an assessment of the clear risk in the theatre of conflict, which in this case is Gaza. We therefore made an assessment of the licences that could be used in Gaza ... Notwithstanding the concerns around international humanitarian law in that theatre of action, the hon. Gentleman should recognise the real threats that Israel faces from Lebanese Hezbollah, recognise what the Houthis are doing in the Red sea ... and recognise the long-standing relationship that this country has with Israel, particularly as regards the intelligence and military co-operation that keeps much of the middle east and the world safe. On that basis, my remarks are measured, and I defend that.

Laura Kyrke-Smith (Labour): ... I also appreciate his acknowledgment that Israel could do much more to allow aid to reach people in Gaza. What further conversations has he

had with the Israeli Government to ask them to ensure that aid workers can do their vital work safely and effectively, and that aid can get to those who desperately need it?

David Lammy: I have raised the issue of aid workers, and the tremendous loss of aid workers' lives in this conflict, directly in all my meetings with the Israeli Government. Another issue sits alongside this: the issue of deconfliction. In any war, there are rules, and one of the rules is that aid workers should be able to get medical supplies and aid to the civilians who need it. There have been real issues with deconfliction zones, and the number of aid workers and UN workers who have died in this conflict ...

Sammy Wilson (DUP): The only people who will be overjoyed by this decision are the Hamas terrorists who murdered six hostages in cold blood at the weekend. They have been handed the hope that this Government will not stand firm in their defence of Israel's right to defend itself.

col 47 Let us look at the threadbare arguments that the Foreign Secretary has used. He says that these arms might be used to breach international humanitarian law, yet he admits that the Government cannot arbitrate on whether Israel has done so to date. He says that civilian deaths have been caused, yet hardly a couple of paragraphs later in his statement he states that the civilian deaths are the result of Hamas embedding itself in the civilian population, with no regard for the people affected. The last reason he gives for his decision is that Israel is responsible for those deaths, but he then admits that it is not possible to determine who is responsible for the deaths—or, indeed, how many deaths there have been; in most cases, we rely on Hamas propaganda for that number. ...

David Lammy: ... this party supported British fighters taking to the skies on 13 April in the defence of Israel when missiles were being delivered from Iran. This party supported the last Government in their defence of Israel following the attacks from the Houthis in the Red sea. I remind him that I have not gone as far as Margaret Thatcher went in 1982. ...

Chi Onwurah (Labour): ... The Foreign Secretary will have seen the protests in Tel Aviv last night, and the strikes called by Israeli labour unions to try to persuade the Israeli Government to make a deal and bring hostages home. From his discussions with the Israeli Government, what does he think are the main obstacles to a deal that brings the hostages home and delivers a ceasefire in Gaza?

David Lammy: ... what brings this to an end is a ceasefire. The issues boil down to the security of Israel once we get to that ceasefire. She will no doubt have read about the issues around the Philadelphi corridor, and Israel's insistence that it should still be present in Gaza; that is a matter of discussion. There have been issues around the hostages, who must come out—that is absolutely right—and the prisoners in Israel's prisons, the Palestinians in particular. ...

col 48 **Jeremy Corbyn (Independent):** The Foreign Secretary will be well aware of the decisions made by the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. He will also be well aware that the world has condemned Israel for its illegal occupation of the west bank, the settlement policy and the killing of 40,000 people in Gaza. On the suspension of some arms contracts, can he explain what effect that will actually have on Israel's ability to continue the bombardment of Gaza, or will it continue unabated? Will he also explain what role, legally or otherwise, Britain has played in overflying Gaza with surveillance aircraft, and explain the use of RAF Akrotiri as a staging post for aircraft going to Israel, which many people believe are carrying weapons to be used to bomb Gaza?

David Lammy: ... our arms exports to Israel amount to about 1% of its arms; in fact, the United States, Germany and others are much more engaged in selling arms to Israel, so when he asks about the effect, he can draw his own conclusions. ...

Melanie Ward (Labour): Israeli military F-16 aircraft have dropped thousands of bombs on civilians in Gaza in the last 11 months. UN weapons inspectors confirmed that this

includes bombing the premises of the aid agencies Medical Aid for Palestinians and the International Rescue Committee, which housed Palestinian aid workers, international aid workers and doctors, in January of this year. F-16s have further killed thousands of Palestinian civilians who had fled their homes to what the Israeli military had designated a safe zone in al-Mawasi. May I ask the Foreign Secretary to confirm that this arms ban will include licences related to the F-16, and if it does, that this is in service of upholding UK and international law and protecting civilian lives?

May I also express extreme concern at the ongoing Israeli military action in the west bank? ... The west bank and Jerusalem are at boiling point, and that is alongside the horrors in Gaza. What action is the Foreign Secretary taking to uphold international law there, too?

David Lammy: ... we have fully assessed the export licensing regime, and weapons that might be used in the conflict—including those that she mentions—have been excluded. She is right to raise the issues of deconfliction, and the aid workers who have lost their lives. I reassure her that I have raised those issues with the Prime Minister in Israel and other members of the Government, and pressed them hard. ...

Mike Martin (Liberal Democrat): We have had some very strong words from the Foreign Secretary ... Looking forward, however, what levers does he have, and when will he pull them?

col 49 **David Lammy:** ... to bring about peace, as we saw in Northern Ireland, we need partners for peace. The principal partners here are Benjamin Netanyahu and Sinwar. The deal we have on the table could bring about that peace. ...

Andy Slaughter (Labour): We have seen the most serious incursions into the west bank for 20 years. It is under cover of the horror happening in Gaza; otherwise it would be leading the news. Towns such as Jenin are completely cut off, with the water supply cut and the streets ploughed up. What is the Government's specific response to that, which is really a form of collective punishment? Has the Foreign Secretary looked at whether arms and equipment are being used specifically in the west bank?

David Lammy: ... the UK position is clear: settlements are completely unacceptable and illegal under international law. They present an obstacle to peace, and they threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. ...

Ben Lake (Plaid Cymru): Amid the devastation of the bombardment and the collapse in civilian infrastructure, civilians in Gaza must now contend with polio. As has been mentioned this afternoon, to be effective, the UN vaccination programme needs to attain some 90% coverage of the population. What is the Foreign Secretary's assessment of the initial progress on the scheme? What steps are his Government taking to facilitate a swift and hopefully effective roll-out?

David Lammy: ... It is horrendous that polio has returned after two decades of absence in Gaza. We convened and pressed to get this pause in Gaza to get children vaccinated so that we do not see a new flowering of that horrendous disease and affliction. ...

John Pearce (Labour): ... The Iranian regime and their proxies are one of the biggest barriers to ending that conflict and achieving a sustainable ceasefire. Does the Secretary of State agree that tackling the threat from Iran is vital? ...

col 50 **David Lammy:** ... I would not want the House to lose sight of the further sanctions on four individuals that I announced in the House this afternoon; ... My hon. Friend is absolutely right about the dangers that the IRGC poses. ... This remains the very biggest and most important of issues for us in the UK, and it is absolutely right to keep it centre stage.

Ellie Chowns (Green): The news about the suspension of some export licences is indeed welcome ... but I am alarmed that the principle underpinning criterion 2C seems to have been inconsistently applied. In particular, the justification that the Foreign Secretary offered for not suspending licences for the F-35 appears inconsistent. There appears to

be clear evidence of risk—I understand that there are online posts from the Israel Defence Forces indicating that F-35s have been used in bombing Gaza—so I urge him to review the case again and to suspend those licences. Will he also clarify whether licensing continues for R902(W) Wankel engines, which were involved in the attack on World Central Kitchen humanitarian workers?

David Lammy: ... In looking at the F-35, it is important to understand that there is a global supply chain. She will recognise the very serious threats that exist across much of the globe in other terrible theatres of conflict. I think that, were she in my situation, she too would make the judgment that we should do nothing to equip those who would cause tremendous harm in relation to this decision. ...

Olivia Blake (Labour): The children of Gaza have faced an onslaught from above and now face the spread of disease. Will the Foreign Secretary consider once again bringing those who are most vulnerable to the UK for medical treatment? ...

David Lammy: ... My right hon. Friend the Member for Oxford East (Anneliese Dodds) and I made statements in our first weeks in office on supporting UK-Med and restoring the funding to UNRWA, to ensure that those children get the medical aid they need at this time. I am afraid my assessment is that, across Gaza, it is not sufficient, for the reasons that I have discussed, but it was important that we put all the aid and money we could into that endeavour, particularly on behalf of those young children. Another issue that I am tremendously concerned about is the amount of young people who are not in school. This has gone on for months, and young people must be in school.

col 51 **Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... I defend the right of Israel to protect all its people, as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland did for its own citizens against IRA terrorism, and as Ukraine has done against Russian aggression. ... Our hearts ache for those hostage families who have received the news that they feared and dreaded for almost a year. That even more forcibly underlines the need to ensure that either the hostages or their remains are brought home, and that steps be taken for peace in the middle east ... Will he outline what further steps can be taken along with our allies to bring about this much-needed peace?

David Lammy: Today's decision relates to an independent process concerning our strategic export licensing criteria. It comes on yet another day of tremendous pain for those hostage families—I am acutely aware of that. It is why I have sought to speak to those families—those who have a relationship with our own country, and those beyond as well—and to meet them when I have been in Israel. My heart bleeds for them. The pain and suffering that they are going through is torturous. That there are so many left is unbelievable. To have gone so many months not knowing whether their loved one is alive or dead is horrific. Anyone who looks at the front pages of the international news can see those beautiful young people who have been taken from us in the most horrific of ways; frankly, it brings tears to the eyes. I offer my deepest condolences—all of us do—to those families who have learned that they have lost their loved ones over the last few days.

Apsana Begum (Independent): The Foreign Secretary announced that 30 of approximately 350 arms export licences will now be suspended. That is still less than 10% of the total number of arms export licences to Israel. Given that over 40,000 Palestinians have now been killed, Israel is expanding its military operations in the occupied west bank and a Foreign Office official has resigned, stating that “it's actually quite clear...that...Israel is perpetuating war crimes in plain sight”, will the UK Government ensure that the UK is not complicit in Israel's war crimes, and will they suspend all arms sales to Israel?

David Lammy: I have followed the quasi-legal process that we have in this country—one of the most robust regimes in the world. I stand by the decision that I have made that approximately 30 export licences to Israel should be suspended at this time. ...

col 52 Ayoub Khan (Independent): ... I am confident that, even though our arms trade is insignificant, it is bound to have a repercussion on other countries that provide arms licences ... What steps can he take, in liaising with his Israeli counterparts, in relation to the Palestinian children who will now receive polio vaccinations and are being moved from pillar to post, without a real safe zone? Will the Foreign Secretary seek assurances that they will be given a safe zone and not be blown away after being given their vaccinations?

David Lammy: Yes.

Catherine Fookes (Labour): ... Will my right hon. Friend share with us when a further review of the remaining licences will be available? Will he consider encouraging other countries around the world to do as we have done and suspend their licences to Israel?

David Lammy: ... Our regime is our regime; different countries will have different arrangements. It is for them to democratically determine those arrangements, and they will have made a range of different assessments. She will also understand that, as I said, there are really only two or three countries that sell substantial amounts to Israel and, in truth, we are not one of them. ... As I said in my statement, it is not a judgment. It is not for me, the Government or any of us in this place to act as judge and jury. That is a matter for the appropriate international courts and must be determined in the usual way. I emphasise that it is the clear risk judgment of our export licensing criteria that has required me to make this judgment.

Chris Murray (Labour): ... Our overwhelming priority must be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Does the Foreign Secretary agree that both sides must come to the table to end the conflict, and will the Foreign Office strain every diplomatic sinew to effect that?

David Lammy: Yes. We need a ceasefire now. It is in the hands of the major actors to bring that about, and to get those hostages out and get that hostage deal. So many families in Israel want to see that hostage deal and to bring the suffering of the Palestinian people to an end, so the aid can get in in the quantities required. It is within our reach. ...

col 53 Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op): We have been talking about polio today because, tragically, we have learnt that that infectious disease is taking a grip in Gaza. However, there are many other communicable diseases in Gaza which are spreading. Therefore, just focusing on polio will not be sufficient to save lives. ...

David Lammy: I assure my hon. Friend that both the Minister for Development, my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxford East (Anneliese Dodds), and I are working on these issues, and that our support for all medical aid in Gaza is paramount. ...

Alice Macdonald (Labour Co-op): The Foreign Secretary rightly said in his statement that famine was looming ever larger in Gaza ... The World Food Programme has managed to bring in only half the aid needed, and, indeed, recently suspended movements of its staff after they came under attack. Will the Foreign Secretary expand on the assessment of hunger and malnutrition levels in Gaza, and on the specific action that the Government are taking to push for unimpeded access to food aid?

col 54 David Lammy: It is of tremendous concern that over the last few days the World Food Programme has suspended its activities in Gaza because its own workers have come under attack in connection with issues of deconfliction that have already been raised today. ... We will be redoubling our efforts over the coming days, and working with international partners to see that people do not go without the food that would keep them from famine status.

Matthew Patrick (Labour): I welcome the Foreign Secretary's call for an immediate ceasefire, because that is the route for hostages to be returned home and for aid to flow into all corners of Gaza, and I welcome his call for a two-state solution, because that is the only route to a lasting peace in the region. I also welcome the clarity about the fact that there is no moral equivalence between the Israeli Government and the heinous action and intent of Hamas. May I ask the Foreign Secretary what steps can be taken to stop, or stem, the flow of money, aid and weapons from Iran to its proxies, who are so determined to

bring about Israel's total destruction?

David Lammy: ... He is entirely right to put the spotlight on Iran. That is why I have announced further sanctions today, it is why we keep the position of the IRGC under close review, and it is why I have spoken to the Iranians twice in the last two weeks and urged de-escalation. It is also why I have been to Lebanon and met its Prime Minister, its Speaker and others, including those who could convey messages to Hezbollah. We have military intelligence capability that is among the best in the world, working with our partners, and these are issues of the utmost importance in relation to global security.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/F5A06C09-84E1-4788-AF6F-E1560E2B25D3/MiddleEastUpdate>

UNSCR 1701, referred to above by David Lammy, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701(2006))

The strategic export licensing criteria, referred to above by David Lammy and Ellie Chowns, can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-12-08/hcws449>

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

Exports to Israel: Military Operations in Gaza

The Secretary of State for Business and Trade (Jonathan Reynolds) [HCWS64] The UK Government have been absolutely clear that Israel must, in taking military action to support its legitimate right to self-defence, do so while adhering to international humanitarian law.

Following a rigorous process in line with the UK's legal obligations, the UK Government have concluded that there is a clear risk that military exports to Israel, where used for military operations in Gaza, might be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law. To continue to permit these exports would therefore be inconsistent with our strategic export licensing criteria.

The Foreign Secretary has now considered detailed assessments and has determined that, while Israel has the capability to comply with international humanitarian law and the most senior Ministers and officials have affirmed Israel's commitment to do so, there are significant doubts about its record of compliance. Consequently, he has advised me that there is a clear risk that some UK exports to Israel might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

A thorough process has now been followed and the summary of the Government's assessment is being published.

I have therefore instructed officials to suspend licences for exports to Israel, where we have assessed those items are for use in military operations in Gaza. This includes approximately 30 export licences for items which could be used in the current conflict. This includes components for fighter aircraft—F-16s—parts for unmanned aerial vehicles, naval systems, and targeting equipment.

The Government condemned Hamas' barbaric attack on 7 October and supports Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law. The Government are also working intensively with international partners to encourage wider regional de-escalation in the context of recent events.

This is not a blanket ban, but targets relevant licences that could be used in military operations in Gaza. Assessments of Israel's commitment to international humanitarian law will continue, including with regard to the provision of food and medical supplies to civilians in Gaza and the treatment of detainees, and may change over time to allow reinstatement

of these licences.

Affected exporters will be notified of that suspension.

The UK stresses that there is no equivalence between Hamas terrorists and Israel's democratic Government. The UK remains committed to supporting Israel's self-defence. But to license arms exports to Israel, the UK must assess their compliance with international humanitarian law, notwithstanding the abhorrence of their opponents' tactics and ideology.

In the context of this suspension, I have also considered the particular issue of the F-35 strike fighter programme. I am grateful to the Defence Secretary for his advice on this issue.

The F-35 is an aircraft that operates globally, forming a key capability in the militaries of many of our allies.

The F-35 programme has a significant dependence on the UK, which provides unique and critical components. Due to the nature of the F-35 as an international collaborative programme, it is not currently possible to suspend licensing of F-35 components for use by Israel without prejudicing the entire global F-35 programme, including its broader strategic role in NATO and our support to Ukraine. This Government have an unwavering commitment to the security not just of this country but to our allies around the world, especially at a time when we face increased global insecurity and volatility.

In this context, with a view to ensuring international peace and security, exports to the global F-35 programme will be excluded from this suspension decision, except where going direct to Israel. This is in line with the written ministerial statement that issued the strategic export licensing criteria on 8 December 2021, which provided that application of the criteria would be without prejudice to the application to specific cases of specific measures as may be announced to Parliament from time to time. This will be kept under review.

The UK continues to call for an immediate ceasefire to the conflict in Gaza, the release of all hostages and a significant increase in the amount of aid to civilians in Gaza.

The Foreign Secretary and I will provide further updates to Parliament as appropriate.

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/24090222000013/ExportsToIsraelMilitaryOperationsInGaza)

[02/debates/24090222000013/ExportsToIsraelMilitaryOperationsInGaza](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/24090222000013/ExportsToIsraelMilitaryOperationsInGaza)

The December 2021 ministerial statement referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-12-08/hcws449>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Department for Business and trade

UK suspends around 30 arms export licences to Israel for use in Gaza over International Humanitarian Law concerns

... The Government has taken the decision that the UK will suspend arms export licences to Israel for use in military operations in Gaza, following a review of Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law.

The UK's robust export licensing criteria states that the Government will not issue export licences if the items might be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.

The suspension will not change the UK's steadfast support for Israel's security, and the decision will be kept under review.

On day one in office, the Foreign Secretary commissioned a thorough review into Israel's compliance with International Humanitarian Law, and has travelled to Israel twice since being appointed to the role to understand the situation on the ground.

These assessments have led to serious concerns about aspects of Israel's compliance,

and the Government has concluded there is a clear risk that items exported to Israel under these 30 licences might be used in serious violations of IHL and is therefore suspending certain exports immediately from today. ...

Foreign Secretary David Lammy said: Facing a conflict such as this, it is this Government's legal duty to review export licences.

It is with regret that I inform the House today, the assessment I have received finds that for certain UK arms exports to Israel there exists a clear risk that they might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law.

Therefore today we are announcing the suspension of around 30 export licences to Israel as required under the Export Controls frameworks.

The UK continues to support Israel's right to self-defence in accordance with international law.

Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said: Our world renowned defence industry operates under one of the most robust export licence regimes in the world, and we have a duty to uphold both our domestic and international legal obligations.

That is why after assessing the latest available advice, I have taken the difficult decision to suspend certain arms licences for exports from the UK to Israel. By suspending these licences, I am fulfilling our commitment to avoiding the risk that UK exports could be used in IHL violations in the Gaza conflict. There will remain however an important commitment to maintaining the F-35 programme which is integral to international security.

The suspension will apply to around 30 items used in the current conflict in Gaza which go to the IDF, from a total of 350 licences to Israel. The list of suspended items includes important components which go into military aircraft, including fighter aircraft, helicopters and drones as well as items which facilitate ground targeting, that would be used in Gaza. ...

UK components for the multi-national F-35 joint strike fighter programme will be excluded from this decision, except where going directly to Israel.

Any suspension of those pooled parts is not possible without having a significant effect on the global F35 fleet with serious implications for international peace and security. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-suspends-around-30-arms-export-licences-to-israel-for-use-in-gaza-over-international-humanitarian-law-concerns>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Summary of the IHL process, decision and the factors taken into account

The Export Control Act 2002 and the Export Control Order 2008 establish strategic controls over military and dual-use goods, prohibiting their export from the UK without a Government-issued licence. ... Licencing decisions are made on a case-by-case basis against the UK's Strategic Export Licensing Criteria (SELC) ...

Whilst all of the Criteria have been carefully considered, in relation to Israel, the most significant Criterion since 7 October 2023 has been Criterion 2(c), because, as a result of Israel's participation in armed conflict in Gaza since that date, international humanitarian law (IHL) is the body of rules which is most likely to be engaged by the use of items being exported. Criterion 2(c) states: Having assessed the recipient country's attitude towards relevant principles established by instruments of international humanitarian law, the Government will: (c) Not grant a licence if it determines there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law. ...

The assessment process gathers information from a wide range of sources, including: reporting from NGOs on the ground; reports from other FCDO desks and from Posts; reporting in the media; statements from the UN, NGOs and other organisations; and

reporting from HMG engagement with Israeli counterparts. The process also draws on a log of military incidents (such as air strikes or ground operations) and statements by political actors, which is prepared on a regular basis. This information is analysed to focus on incidents in Gaza for which there is credible information and/or reliable evidence, and broader thematic issues of particular concern. ...

Having considered the most recent assessment, the Government has determined that there is a clear risk that certain items, if exported, might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of IHL. The following factors were key to the judgement:

The assessment concluded that Israel has not fulfilled its duty as Occupying Power to ensure - to the fullest extent of the means available to it - those supplies essential to the survival of the population of Gaza. It has concluded that the level of aid remains insufficient. While Israel does not accept it is the Occupying Power, it accepts the separate obligation to allow the free passage of humanitarian relief by others, such as the UN. While Israel has both a right to conduct security inspections and an obligation to deconflict aid from military activities, and while there are credible allegations of Hamas looting aid, it was assessed that overall, Israel could reasonably do more to facilitate humanitarian access and distribution. ...

There have been credible claims of the mistreatment of detainees. The volume and consistency of these allegations suggest at least some instances of mistreatment contrary to IHL. Israel has launched investigations into these allegations. However, the sufficiency of those investigations is unclear, partly because Israel continues to deny access to places of detention for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). ...

Despite the mass casualties of the conflict, it has not been possible to reach a determinative judgment on allegations regarding Israel's conduct of hostilities. This is in part due to the opaque and contested information environment in Gaza and the challenges of accessing the specific and sensitive information necessary from Israel, such as intended targets and anticipated civilian harm. This is further complicated by credible reports that Hamas embeds itself in a tightly concentrated civilian population and in civilian infrastructure.

To read the full paper see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summary-of-the-international-humanitarian-law-ihl-process-decision-and-the-factors-taken-into-account/summary-of-the-ihl-process-decision-and-the-factors-taken-into-account>

The Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, referred to above, can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-12-08/hcws449>

Department for Business and Trade

Notice: NTE 2024/20: suspension of licences for Israel

Following the Foreign Secretary's Oral Statement to Parliament and the [Written Statement made by the Secretary of State for Business and Trade on 2 September 2024](#), and under article 32 of the Export Control Order 2008, the Secretary of State for Business and Trade has suspended extant export licences where we assess the items are for use in military operations in Gaza. ...

Following these statements, the ECJU [Export Control Joint Unit] has amended the following open general licences:

- [Open general export licence \(exports in support of Joint Strike Fighter: F-35 Lightning II\)](#)
- [Open general export licence PCBs and components for military goods](#)
- [Open general export licence technology for military goods](#)
- [Open general export licence software and source code for military goods](#)

- [Open general trade control licence for category C goods](#)
- [Open general trade control licence trade and transportation: small arms and light weapons](#)

To read the full notice see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-to-exporters-202420-suspension-of-licences-for-israel/nte-202420-suspension-of-licences-for-israel>

The Foreign Secretary's Oral Statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/F5A06C09-84E1-4788-AF6F-E1560E2B25D3/MiddleEastUpdate#contribution-78DA6459-BB53-4645-8872-CB7C4F535069>

The Export Control Order 2008, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/3231/contents>

Scottish Government FoI Releases

Former First Minister's Middle East Eye interview, Al-Mahdi Islamic Centre and UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) funding

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202400410299/>

and

<https://tinyurl.com/2enfcrb3>

Correspondence regarding United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and Turkish President Erdogan

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202400418004/>

and

<https://tinyurl.com/3y6cyv3y>

Office of the Chief Rabbi

Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis It beggars belief that the British government, a close strategic ally of Israel, has announced a partial suspension of arms licences, at a time when Israel is fighting a war for its very survival on seven fronts forced upon it on the 7th October, and at the very moment when six hostages murdered in cold blood by cruel terrorists were being buried by their families. As Israel faces down the threat of Iran and its proxies, not just to its own people, but to all of us in the democratic west; this announcement feeds the falsehood that Israel is in breach of International Humanitarian Law, when in fact it is going to extraordinary lengths to uphold it. Sadly, this announcement will serve to encourage our shared enemies. It will not help to secure the release of the remaining 101 hostages, nor contribute to the peaceful future we wish and pray for, for all people in the region and beyond. Britain and Israel have so much to gain by standing together against our common enemies for the sake of a safer world. Surely that must be the way forward.

<https://x.com/chiefrabbi/status/1830713463456387159>

United Nations

Thousands more children protected on day 2 of Gaza polio campaign

The mass inoculation drive got off to a "very good start" on Sunday in central Gaza,

according to the UN agency for Palestine refugees, UNRWA, whose medical centres are a key part of the operation. ...

“There were 87,000 vaccinated on the first day out of 156,000 that we are hoping to reach in the Middle Area,” said Louise Wateridge, Senior Communications Officer for UNRWA, the largest UN agency in the Gaza Strip. “It’s very promising that already, we have heard interest from parents who have come from Khan Younis, who have come from the southern area, and are asking our staff there and asking our teams, ‘When is the vaccination going to be available for us? When can we take our children?’” ...

Speaking on day two of the vaccination drive, Ms. Wateridge reported seeing “hundreds of children” at a health centre in Deir Al-Balah and more at an UNRWA school in the central city. ...

UN agencies UNRWA, the UN World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Palestinian health authorities aim to achieve at least 90 per cent vaccination coverage in each round of the campaign to curb the current outbreak and prevent the international spread of polio.

Amid outbreaks of hepatitis, diarrhoea and other preventable diseases linked to 10 months of heavy Israeli bombardment and clashes with Hamas militants, UN agencies underscored the need to for all warring sides to maintain the agreed eight-hour pause in hostilities. “One of the biggest challenges is actually safely distributing the vaccinations because we have some areas in these so-called [humanitarian] pause zones between 6am and 2pm, there needs to be no fighting,” UNRWA’s Ms. Wateridge told UN News. “We are still struggling to get access to facilities and access to families and children in those areas. It’s far too dangerous for them to travel, to move; there is ongoing fighting.”

Ms. Wateridge reported “a lot of strikes” on Monday morning and through the night on Sunday. “So the fighting has not stopped by any means....

Last week, Israeli authorities agreed to a series of three-day “humanitarian pauses” in central, southern, and northern Gaza, allowing the vaccination campaign to proceed. ...

“The one thing I noticed yesterday was, you know, going an hour without hearing a bomb,” UNRWA’s Ms. Wateridge said. “Going an hour without hearing a strike...it was noticeable that there was a calmer and quieter day yesterday because it has been so relentless for the last few weeks and also so many evacuation orders; 16 evacuation orders in August alone. Thousands, hundreds of thousands of people and families and being forced to flee.”

To read the full press release

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1153821>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Apartheid Israel is targeting Gaza and the West Bank simultaneously, says expert

A UN independent expert warned today that Israel’s intensification of its military assault against the northern West Bank marks a dangerous escalation of grave violence and human rights violations committed by Israel against the Palestinian people since October 7, 2023.

“Israel’s genocidal violence risks leaking out of Gaza and into the occupied Palestinian territory as a whole,” warned Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

“The writing is on the wall, and we cannot continue to ignore it. There is mounting evidence that no Palestinian is safe under Israel’s unfettered control. While this was also true before Hamas’ attack on 7 October, the risk has since intensified,” Albanese said.

Continuous genocidal incitements by top Israeli leaders and officials remain unpunished, and are often acted upon by soldiers, armed settlers and others, revealing the intent to destroy the Palestinian people under occupation. Increasingly loud calls by Israeli leaders for turning the towns in the West Bank and refugee camps into a “mini-Gaza”, are

translating into military operations that are causing heavy death tolls and widespread destruction to the West Bank's urban areas.

Systematic aerial and ground attacks on Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarem and Tubas governorates, particularly targeting refugee camps, have intensified in the past few months. Recently, on 28 August, Israeli occupation forces launched a full-scale military operation against these areas that have already killed 22 Palestinians and injured dozens.

Bulldozers have destroyed critical infrastructure, including roads, water and energy grids. New checkpoints have been established, following Israel's Foreign Minister Katz's declaration that "We must deal with the threat just as we deal with the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza, including the temporary evacuation of Palestinian residents and whatever steps are required. This is a war for everything, and we must win it."

An evacuation order has been issued to Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarem and a city hospital in besieged Jenin, currently treating 150 patients. The Israeli occupation forces have blocked entry to the three main hospitals and imposed a curfew, while Israeli ground forces have invaded and besieged Shu'fat refugee camp in East Jerusalem.

The expert notes that since 7 October 2023, 652 Palestinians have been killed outside of Gaza, including 151 children, thousands injured, over 3,300 have been displaced and over 12,000 arbitrarily detained, de facto hostages of the unlawful occupying Power.

The increasing violence in the West Bank coincides with unprecedented levels of displacement, depopulation and land confiscation carried out by the State of Israel in collaboration with settler militias in the area since the Oslo era. This continues even after the International Court of Justice concluded that this occupation is unlawful, and Israel must dismantle it together with the colonies and its associated regime.

"Apartheid Israel is targeting Gaza and the West Bank simultaneously, as part of an overall process of elimination, replacement and territorial expansion" she said.

"The long-standing impunity granted to Israel is enabling the de-Palestinisation of the occupied territory, leaving Palestinians at the mercy of the forces pursuing their elimination as a national group," warned the expert.

"The international community, made of both states and non-state actors, including companies and financial institutions, must do everything it can to immediately end the risk of genocide against the Palestinian people under Israel's occupation, ensure accountability and ultimately end Israel's colonisation of Palestinian territory."

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/apartheid-israel-targeting-gaza-and-west-bank-simultaneously-says-expert>

UNRWA

The spread of misinformation & disinformation continues to be used as a weapon in the war in #Gaza: Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA Commissioner-General

As part of its campaign to undermine & discredit @UNRWA, the Government of Israel has been buying ads on @Google to block users from giving donations to the Agency + undertake a defamation campaign.

@UNRWA is the largest humanitarian organization responding to the crisis in #Gaza. This does not just hurt the agency's reputation but most importantly it puts the lives of our staff at risk. These deliberate efforts to spread misinformation should stop + be investigated.

Companies including social media platforms continue to make profit through spreading misinformation.

More regulations are needed to combat disinformation + hate speech. @WIRED

@UNRWAUSA <https://wired.com/story/israel-unrwa-usa-hamas-google-search-ads/>

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/spread-misinformation-disinformation-continues-be-used-weapon-war-gaza>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3741>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421>

Scottish Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 3 days**

Gaps in Equality Legislation [Northern Ireland] (closing date 6 September 2024)

<https://consult.nia-yourassembly.org.uk/committee-for-the-executive-office/gaps-in-equality-legislation-inquiry>

Equality and Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2025-2028 (closing date 3 October 2024)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/our-work/our-strategic-plan-consultation-2025-2028>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438